

USERS' NEWS

JULY, 1981

VOL. 2, NO. 6

NEW OFFICERS TAKE CHARGE

Officers for the June-December term were elected at the last meeting of 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON.

New President of our club is Joe Stanfield. Royce Bordman will remain in the office of Vice-President/Treasurer by Popular Vote and Brigitte Schaefer was voted in as Secretary.

New President Stanfield will be bringing a few new ideas to the club.

Stanfield is checking into the possibility of taking part of the meeting time and splitting it into two time slots where the disk users will group together with a program geared towards disks and the cassette users will meet together to hear a progream for the cassette users.

According to Stanfield, sometimes a program geared towards the cassette users doesn't interest the disk users and many times the disk oriented programs are not clear for the cassette user who may not understand using disks.

Stanfield also noted that a club member suggested that the club check into the feasibility of having 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON sponsor a computer show in a local mall so that

the general public will be able to see what microcomputers can do.

Many people are wondering what is so special about microcomputers, but won't go to a computer store to find out.

A small show in a local mall will attract the general public who is shopping at the mall.

Stanfield also noted that maybe refreshments could be served at each meeting.

The President also wants to make sure that programs at the next meetings run within the time limit. Stanfield explained that the program should give the member enough information about something to wet his appetite for that subject so that the member will get together with the speaker to get more details on that particular subject.

One major change in the new President's operating procedure will be the delegation of authority to other members of the club.

Stanfield has already selected Bud Harvey as Program Chairman. Harvey will be in charge of making arrangements for speakers for our club meetings.

Harvey asks that any members who have an idea for a program for a fu-

NEXT MEETING

Date: July 1, 1981

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Program: COMPUTER GAMES-

Analysis of a game....

Development of a game.

How to write your own game program by BUD

HARVEY

Surprise program

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ture meeting call him at 754-6234. If no answer, call 981-7965 and leave a message on the answering machine.

The Program Chairman said he would like each club member to think about what programs he would like to have later in the fall and contact him about the topics.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT BY JOE STANFIELD

New President of 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON Joe Stanfield is on a well-deserved vacation and will (hopefully!) be back in time for our next meeting.

(Editor's note: The staff of USERS' NEWS would like to welcome Joe as our new President and thanks him for agreeing to continue the new tradition of writing a President's column in USERS' NEWS. His first column will be in the next issue of USERS' NEWS.)

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY STATUS

As of press time, only one-third of the members of 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON had returned their membership survey form.

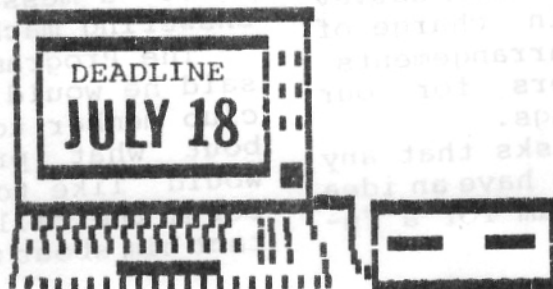
Members are reminded that the sooner all forms are received by the USERS' NEWS staff, the sooner work on the membership handbook can begin.

Initial review of the survey forms show most of the club members prefer the membership handbook be printed as loose leaf pages, with each member providing his own notebook in which to keep the handbook. Many feel this format is better for updating and changing information.

A few of the members prefer a 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 handbook, stapled together with extra blank space after each alphabetized section so that new members' information can be added.

Those who have not received a survey form may pick one up at the next meeting or contact the USERS' NEWS Editor at 663-7293 7 - 11 p.m.

Members who have not returned their form should do so by sending it to: USERS' NEWS, P.O. Box 20000 #220, HOUSTON, TEXAS, 77025.



80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON meets the first Wednesday of each month. Anyone interested in microcomputers is welcome to join our group. Membership dues are \$5.00 per calendar year, which includes your subscription to USERS' NEWS.

USERS' NEWS

EDITOR: Brigitte Schaefer

PRODUCTION: John Schaefer

THE PROGRAM DOCTOR: E. Wood

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

TAPE LIBRARY: Floyd Atkinson

MICRONET NEWS: Ben Taylor

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

USERS' NEWS is published monthly by 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON. Mail contributions, letters to the Editor, comments, etc. to:

P. O. Box 20000, No. 220
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DEADLINE: 15th of month prior to publication.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Included in members' dues. Individual issues available to non-members for 75¢ per issue. No charge for newsletter exchange. USERS' NEWS mailing list is available for sale. Publisher does not assume responsibility for programs and other material submitted that may be copyrighted.

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Book Review

Friedman, Paul

COMPUTER PROGRAMS IN BASIC

Prentice-Hall, Inc. c.1981. 286 pp. \$19.95

Compiled from 15 microcomputer magazines, this highly useful book lists every program in BASIC published from each magazine's first issue through December 1979. The description of each program is remarkably complete -- including a list of all statements and functions in the program which are NOT included in ANSI Minimal BASIC. And subsequent updates to the original article/program.

I have never seen so exhaustive a survey of the wide, wide field of BASIC programs combined with so much useful information about each program. Paul Friedman is obviously a dedicated and zealous collector and systematizer. By adhering stringently to a specified format, he has accomplished a landmark work.

For four years I've been keeping my own (sporadic) index to programs and articles of interest. At one stroke, Paul Friedman has rendered my 2000-plus card index obsolescent. His analysis of the hardware and software requirements of each program is brief, easily grasped and conclusive.

Two additional features are together almost worth the price of the book in themselves. In the introductory pages is a concise history of BASIC and lucid explanation of ANSI Minimal BASIC, and at the rear of the book are (a) an alphabetized list of BASIC statements and functions, and (b) a glossary (dictionary) of computerese. The beauty of the list of BASIC statements and functions is that it is boiled down to a line or two for each term so you can scan quickly for the term you don't understand. (It still stupidly separates terms into "statements" and "functions". When will the experts grasp the simple fact that if you need to look up a term, you don't know whether it's a statement, a function, or a whirly-ma-gig? When will we find a list as good as this one in one alphabetical listing?)

The introduction is also outstanding for its clear explanation of the review format, including a chart of the standard review with explanatory arrows to each item. As a rule I skip or skim through introductions. Don't! Not this one.

SHORTCOMINGS

Does this fine work have shortcomings? Yes. It is so good that it's a real disappointment to find that the survey cuts off at the end of 1979. Pity! As a consequence, this book could not include programs from 80-MICROCOMPUTING or from The Alternate Source, both of which began in 1980. We all must hope that Paul Friedman will continue his work, and will issue supplements or new editions which will be much closer to the then-current issues of the source periodicals.

Still another understandable limitation is that Mr. Friedman could not humanly include all microcomputer periodicals in this first (I hope) volume. Omitted are 80-US, Softside/Prog-80/??, the C.I.E. erratic but good publication, and some outstanding club publications such as Octus which have furnished many valuable programs.

Another limitation is that this IS a compendium of BASIC programs. Therefore all the good machine-language programs are missing. Well, you can't expect the whole world in one volume...

The book is an odd size: 11-1/4 x 8-3/4. About the dimensions of 80-Microcomputing -- too tall and too wide spine-to-edge for many bookshelves. So...rack it with your magazines!

A more serious design flaw is the jacket: the word BASIC dominates while the words "Computer Programs In" recede into the black cover. For days I thought this was "just" another book on the BASIC language, and passed it by! (Well, everyone knows that graphic design artists have never solved the mystery of reading... They give us magazine pages with gray type on a blue background, etc.) So when you're browsing at the bookstore and see this black jacket with the big white word, "BASIC" -- Grab it!

--B. C. Taylor



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A Review of:
USE OF THE HOME COMPUTER IN THE STOCK MARKET
by Thomas v. Lenz

Review by Jim Haynes
(as told to B.C. Taylor)
(misstatements and errors are Taylor's.)

This book has been advertised (by the author) in the Wall Street Journal for several weeks. Starting as a small 2-inch ad, it has grown to a big box ad, 3x4". Thinking it must be good, Jim bought it for \$19.95

Jim is disappointed. The programs are for beginners, both in computing and in finance. What is worse, they are all in Level-I BASIC. Anyone can easily write as good ones, if not better.

However, if you need a guide to elementary programming concerned with elementary finance, try your public library -- or persuade the library to buy USE OF THE HOME COMPUTER IN THE STOCK MARKET. Use your \$19.95 for something better!

This submission from JIM HOFWEBER (who noted that USERS' NEWS was desperate for submissions):

"During last month's Round Robin Session, two problems were brought up repeatedly: 1. We need contributions for the newsletter and 2. Some people have difficulty getting to the meetings at the Medical Center from the "remote" areas in which they live. It occurred to me that there might be a simple, partial solution to each of these problems: Has anyone ever suggested carpooling? If anyone is interested, all they need to do is send in their name, phone number(s), and area in which they live. I do not live very far (near the Galleria), but would be delighted to give rides to interested parties."

JIM can be reached at 877-8007.

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